<u>**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**</u>

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

<small>LISTING OF CLAIMS</small>

1.   (Currently amended) An image-enabled, financial transaction processing system for use at a point of presentment, comprising a transaction processor including:

an input at the point of presentment receptive of an image of a physical item at least partially embodying a financial transaction, wherein the image includes a visual record of an amount of monetary value;

an image recognition module adapted to analyze the visual record and recognize the amount from the visual record using optical character recognition to generate an item record including the image and the amount;

a validation module adapted to determine whether the transaction is valid at the point of presentment based on a validation characteristic of the item record, wherein the validation module is configured to accept the item record if the validation characteristic is valid, [[or to]]and, if the validation characteristic is not valid, to reject the item record <u>at the point of presentment</u>, to issue a message identifying an invalid validation characteristic<u> at the point of presentment,</u> and to request correction <u>at the point of presentment</u> if the validation characteristic is not valid;

a balancing module adapted to determine whether the transaction is balanced at the point of presentment based on the amount of monetary value, wherein the balancing module is configured to accept the transaction if it is balanced, [[or to]]and, if the transaction is not balanced, to reject the transaction <u>at the point of</u>

presentment, to issue a message identifying an out-of-balance condition at the point of presentment, and to request a corrective action at the point of presentment if the transaction is not balanced; and

an output at the point of presentment adapted to transmit information indicating whether the transaction is at least one of balanced and valid,

wherein a portion of at least one of the image recognition module, the validation module and the balancing module are embodied on a computer readable medium.

2. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said input is receptive of information in a non-image format that includes the validation characteristic.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the validation characteristic is visually recorded in the image, and said image recognition module is adapted to extract the validation characteristic recorded in the image.

4. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein the validation characteristic corresponds to at least one of a routing number and an account number, and said image recognition module is adapted to recognize the validation characteristic using character recognition.

5. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein the validation characteristic corresponds to a signature of a party to the transaction, the system further comprising a

biometric analysis module adapted to perform a similarity alignment between the signature and a signature stored in memory.

6. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein the validation characteristic corresponds to a digital watermark.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said input is further receptive of an electronic substitute cash ticket having an amount of monetary value associated therewith, and said balancing module is further adapted to determine whether the transaction is balanced based on the amount of monetary value associated with the substitute cash ticket.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said input is receptive of multiple images of multiple physical items embodying the transaction, wherein one image is of an item representative of the transaction as a whole, and said balancing module is adapted to compare totals of amounts extracted from image of items to totals of amounts visually recorded in the image of the item representative of the transaction as a whole.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said balancing module is adapted to generate an electronic version of the transaction, said output is adapted to transmit the electronic version, said input is receptive of supplemental information assistive in at least one of balancing and validating the transaction, and said balancing module is adapted to balance the transaction based on the supplemental information.

10.   (Original)   The system of claim 1, wherein said output is adapted to transmit an electronic version of the transaction including the images.

11.   (Original)   The system of claim 10, wherein the electronic version of the transaction includes metadata marking the transaction as a truncated transaction.

12. (Currently amended) An image-enabled item processing method, comprising:

initiating communication with a party to a financial transaction at a point of presentment of physical items embodying the transaction, wherein at least one physical item has an amount of monetary value visually recorded thereon;

reading item images into computer memory by generating an image record of each of the physical items and storing the image records in computer memory at the point of presentment;

validating the transaction at the point of presentment by comparing a validation characteristic of at least one item to a validation characteristic stored in computer memory by accepting the at least one item if the validation characteristic is valid; [[, or]]

rejecting the at least one item at the point of presentment, issuing a message identifying an invalid validation characteristic at the point of presentment, and requesting correction of the validation characteristic at the point of presentment if the validation characteristic is invalid;

recognizing at least one amount of monetary value recorded on the items by extracting amount sections from the item images and recognizing amounts in the extracted amount sections using optical character recognition;

balancing the transaction at the point of presentment based on at least one recognized amount by accepting the transaction if it is balanced;[[, or]]

rejecting the transaction, issuing a message identifying an out-of-balance condition and requesting a corrective action if the transaction is not balanced before terminating communication with the customer at the point of presentment; and

posting the transaction, including transmitting the item images to a central location having a relational database storing records of transactions.

13.   (Original)   The method of claim 12, further comprising correcting the transaction before said balancing the transaction.

14.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 13, wherein said step of correcting the transaction includes correcting misrecognition of an item detail stored in computer memory.

15.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 13, wherein said step of correcting the transaction includes:

communicating a need for alteration of an item to the party to the transaction;

reading an altered item image into computer memory; and

reflecting alteration of the item in the transaction.

16.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 13, wherein said step of correcting the transaction includes:

communicating a need for removal of an item to the party to the transaction; and

removing the item from the transaction.

17.   (Original)   The method of claim 13, wherein said step of correcting the transaction includes:

requesting at least one additional item from the party to the transaction;

reading an additional item image into computer; and

adding the additional item image to an electronic version of the transaction.

18.   (Original)   The method of claim 13, wherein said step of correcting the transaction includes:

communicating invalidity of an item to the party to the transaction at the point of presentment; and

removing the invalid item from the transaction.

19.   (Original)   The method of claim 13, wherein said step of correcting the transaction include:

reading an item image into computer memory a second time; and

replacing a first instance of the item image in computer memory with a second instance of the item image.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

creating a substitute cash ticket image; and

adding the substitute cash ticket image to an electronic version of the transaction.

21.   (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising tagging an item image with metadata identifying the item image as truncated.

22.   (Original)   The method of claim 12, further comprising employing centralized business rules specifying validation and recognition procedures that are promulgated by a user from a central location to remote locations affording points of presentment.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said step of validating the transaction includes comparing a code line of an item to a plurality of code lines of financial institutions prior to said balancing the transaction.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said step of validating the transaction includes:

identifying a party to the transaction associated with a selected one of the physical items;

extracting a signature of the party to the transaction from an item image related to the selected one of the physical items; and

comparing the signature extracted from the item image to a signature of the party to the transaction stored in computer memory.

25.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

attempting to recognize an identity of a party to the transaction and a total transaction amount based on an image of a deposit slip of the transaction;

attempting to recognize check amounts based on images of checks of the transaction, wherein at least one attempt is governed at least in part by a code line of an associated check;

partially filling an electronic form representing the transaction based on successful recognition attempts; and

completely filling the electronic form based on input from at least one of the party to the transaction and a teller at the point of presentment in communication with the party to the transaction.

26.   (Original) The method of claim 25, further comprising prompting at least one of the party to the transaction and the teller at the point of presentment for input in the case of a failed recognition attempt.

27.   (Original) The method of claim 25, further comprising:

making a comparison between a total amount of the electronic form and a summation of transaction item amounts present in the electronic form; and

informing at least one of the party to the transaction and the teller at the point of presentment of results of the comparison.

28.   (Original)   The method of claim 25, wherein said step of posting the transaction includes storing the item images in computer memory in association with the electronic form.